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ABSTRACT

This study began with a survey of twenty-eight school districts of Erie County, New York, and its aims were to determine and compare attrition in foreign languages in those districts. The data, obtained through discussion with teachers, interviews with students, questionnaires, and Flander's Interaction Analysis, assisted in the formulation of the following conclusions: (1) School districts situated in agricultural and industrial communities offered foreign language study beginning at grade nine, while schools situated in residential communities tended to begin the study of foreign languages in the seventh grade. (2) The attrition of foreign language enrollments in high socioeconomic school districts was substantially less than in school districts situated in lower socioeconomic areas. (3) The critical points in dropping foreign language study occurred at the end of the second and third level. (4) Fifty percent of the students who dropped a foreign language discontinued their study because they had satisfied requirements for college entrance while the other fifty percent discontinued because (a) the second and third levels were "hard"; (b) they preferred another subject; (c) they were not interested in continuing; (d) they were advised to do so by a guidance counselor; and (e) they did not like the teacher. (5) Teachers were aware that the amount of content required was not satisfactorily adjusted to individual differences. (Author/KM)

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Selected Factors of

Language Learning and Language Attrition

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SELECTED FACTORS OF

LANGUAGE LEARNING

AND

LANGUAGE ATTRITION

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Western New York Council of Foreign Language Supervisors

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM OF UNDERACHIEVEMENT AND OF DROP-OUT IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Introduction

The philosophy of foreign language education in the secondary schools of the State of New York before World War II was simple: "The chief aim of foreign language teaching was to secure the ability to read intelligently texts of ordinary difficulty."[1] Hence, for periods of two, three, or four years, the students in our high schools were taught to read, intensively and extensively, grammar and composition; translation and comprehension were also part of the overall program as was evident from the testing and evaluation.

In 1933, the Syllabus in Modern Foreign Languages was issued for the high schools of the State of New York and it became the bible of most foreign language teachers in our secondary schools. The teacher was guided with its clearly-worded outline in the psychological principles and

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[1]Bureau of Secondary Curriculum Development, New York State Education Department, Syllabus in Modern Foreign Languages (Albany, New York, 1937), p. 9.

techniques of reading, translation, aural comprehension, dictation, grammar, and composition.

Then came Pearl Harbor. The G.I., who had studied a foreign language for two, three, or four years in high school, could not understand nor converse with the native whose language he had studied. The U. S. Army organized foreign language courses for some of its personnel with the aim of teaching them to speak and understand a limited number of practical expressions. The program was a success. Many language conferences, meetings, and workshops were held to discuss, demonstrate, and dispute the "New Approach."

Teachers who were accustomed to teaching about the foreign language had to learn to teach in the foreign language, and in 1958, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act, providing funds for teacher-training, classroom equipment, and research. It was a renaissance of language studies.

In New York State an outgrowth of this "renaissance" was the revised Syllabus in Modern Foreign Languages, French for Secondary Schools (1960), and Spanish for Secondary Schools (1961). These handbooks offer detailed suggestions for content, organization, and specific techniques of sequential courses in French and Spanish with ever greater emphasis on language as a means of oral

communication. It is recommended that pupils learn the sound system of the foreign language before being exposed to the writing system; that translation be replaced by reading, and that grammar be taught as patterns of language. In sum, the class period should provide maximum practice in hearing, speaking, reading, and writing the foreign language.

The main linguistic objectives set by the New York State Syllabus are:

1. To understand a native speaker at normal tempo on a subject within the range of the pupil's experience.
2. To speak sufficiently to make direct contact with a native on a subject within the range of the pupil's experiences.
3. To read with direct understanding material on a general subject and on a subject within the pupil's experiences.
4. To write without conscious reference to English, whatever pupils can say. . . .[2]

These skills are interdependent. Understanding and speaking are inextricably joined while reading and writing are built on a solid base of understanding and speaking.

In order to accomplish these goals, longer sequences were recommended by the Regents' Committee. Also, the National Association of Secondary School Principals

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[2]Bureau of Secondary Curriculum Development, New York State Education Department, Spanish for Secondary Schools (Albany, New York, 1961), p. 10.

encouraged a strengthening of modern foreign language programs in secondary schools because of other developments:

1. Provisions of Title III of the National Defense Education Act of 1958 to strengthen modern foreign language instruction and enable schools to expand or renovate facilities for laboratory practice in hearing and speaking a language;

2. Results of experimentation in projects of the NASSP Staff Utilization Study, showing the effectiveness of tape recorders and other electronic aids in instruction;

3. Announcement by the College Entrance Examination Board that college applicants would be tested on listening comprehension in modern foreign languages beginning in the Spring of 1960;

4. The cumulative effect of the findings of the Modern Language Association on the effectiveness of teaching language functionally;

5. Realization by teachers, students, parents, and employers that traditional language teaching, together with too small a time allotment, fails to produce competence in speaking the language;

6. Statements by Dr. James Conant that modern language instruction and enrollment constitute one of the weakest areas of the secondary school program.[3]

The Committee on Curriculum Planning and Development of the National Association of Secondary School Principals because of the above mentioned developments recommended

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[3]National Association of Secondary School Principals, Committee on Curriculum Planning and Development, "Modern Foreign Languages in the Comprehensive Secondary School," Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, XLIII (September, 1959), p. 2.

that students be given the opportunity to begin the study of Modern Languages no later than grade nine and encouraged schools that could do so to initiate Modern Languages study in grades seven and eight.

Each school district has met this challenge to improve foreign language instruction in its own way. Some school districts offer a six-year sequence in foreign languages, some a four-year sequence; others have languages in the elementary grades depending upon the size, the interest, and the background of the community.

In spite of significant progress in methodology a great number of students discontinue the study of a foreign language after the second or third year, and when a student fails to perform up to his usual standard in the language class, this under-achievement is often ascribed to "lack of talent" or "lack of interest," and the matter is not pursued further.

The problem of under-achievement and of drop-out in foreign languages exists at all school levels but seems to be more acute in the senior high school. For this reason the writer will focus upon the junior and senior high schools where foreign language study most frequently begins.

The writer will also be concerned with improvement of the foreign language program because the answer to

under-achievement, to failure, to drop-out, does not lie in eliminating the poor student, but in providing a foreign language experience which is rewarding and which equips the student with a serviceable degree of competence in the foreign language. The school districts upon which this study is based will be referred to simply as School (District) A, B, C, and D.

Statement of the Problem

The primary aim of this study was to examine the foreign language program in A, an Erie County suburban school, with the specific purpose of determining the attrition, and to compare it with that of B, another school having approximately the same enrollment, essentially the same type of student, and equivalent socio-economic background.

A secondary aim was to compare the attrition in foreign languages of A with that of two additional suburban schools (designated as C and D), one having a higher and the other a lower socio-economic background.

In addition, while it was not the purpose of this study to point to cause-and-effect phenomena, the investigation suggests answers to some important questions, such as:

1. Why do high school students drop a foreign language after devoting several years to the study of it?

2. Are there clearly identifiable (and, hence, perhaps predictable) points at which students tend to discontinue their study of a foreign language?

3. To what extent do student-expressed reasons for dropping coincide with other evidence?

4. To what extent do teacher-expressed reasons for student drop-out coincide with other evidence?

5. Does the socio-economic characteristic of a school district appear to correlate with patterns of withdrawal from foreign language study?

Procedures

The following procedures were used in this study:

1. Review of the Literature

   The investigation began with a review of research literature to ascertain what factors had been important to success in foreign language learning and what research had been done on foreign language attrition.

2. Record Search

   Four record sources were used: grade books, junior high school records, senior high school records, and permanent record cards.

3. Observation of Classes

   During the years 1964-1967, the writer visited foreign language classes and used Flanders Interaction

Analysis in order to observe the relationship of teacher-to-student and student-to-student.

4. Discussions with Teachers

Meetings were held with foreign language teachers involved in this study to obtain their viewpoints, and minutes were recorded.

5. Interviews with Students

More than fifty students of School A, chosen randomly, were interviewed, each interview lasting approximately fifteen minutes.

6. Questionnaire

A questionnaire was sent to the foreign language drop-outs of School A who graduated but had dropped the study of the foreign language in the second or third year.

CHAPTER II

FACTORS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Student Factors in Relation to Foreign Language Learning

Success or failure in foreign language study has been approached in the past from various perspectives. In general, there seems to be a rather definite agreement that intelligence is not the only factor involved in the learning of a foreign language. But just what factors tend to lead to linguistic ability have been more frequently postulated than definitely determined.

Is there a general intelligence level below which success in modern language study is improbable?

Is there a general scholarship level below which success is doubtful?

Can special abilities and disabilities involved in learning a foreign language be determined and tested so as to predict future success in this subject?

Can achievement and progress at the end of a semester's work or a year's work be measured so accurately as to predict whether the pupil has the capacity to profit from further work?

The contradictory answers to the above questions plus other findings are reviewed so that we may perceive more clearly which student factors lead to foreign language learning.

In an article written by Manson Grover in 1917 success in English is discussed as a criterion of future success in elementary foreign languages. Here, English is considered to be English composition, and the coefficient between foreign languages and English is .632, a relatively high correlation for foreign languages and English.[1]

In 1925, Jordan thought that intelligence tests have slightly greater value for prognostic purpose than English.[2] He recommended that those pupils who had low linguistic ability and wanted to take a foreign language should have been told that their chances for success were poor and unless they needed the subject for some special purpose or vocation it would perhaps have been better to have taken some other subjects and avoid the probability of failure. If the pupil then elected the language, he would at least know that his efforts had to be concentrated to a high degree in order to obtain even a passing grade. This, the

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[1] Manson Grover, "Success in English as a Criterion of Future Success in Elementary Foreign Language," School and Society, V (1917), pp. 683-85.

[2] J. N. Jordan, "Prognosis in Foreign Languages in Secondary School," School Review, XXXIII (1925), pp. 541-46.

author of the article concluded, would mainly apply to people with an I.Q. lower than 100.

Walter Kaulfers in 1927 conducted a study on the effect of the I.Q. on the grades of one thousand students of foreign language with the purpose of answering the following questions: Do boys require more intelligence than girls to learn a foreign language? Is there a sex difference in foreign language interest? Do students of superior intelligence generally achieve the highest grades in Spanish? His study substantiated the following conclusions:

1. That intelligence has a significant influence upon pupil achievement as measured by teachers' grades.
2. That only pupils of superior habits of application ordinarily survive in the lower levels of mental ability.
3. That the boys as a group achieve less in terms of mental ability than the girls.
4. That boys in gneral require 10 per cent more intelligence than girls to achieve on the same level.
5. That normal trend of mental influence upon foreign language achievement is frequently affected by individual differences, collateral interests and other factors.[3]

In 1928 a survey of 19,416 grades, awarded to approximately 4,700 students in eleven high schools, showed that the number of failures in the foreign language had

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[3]Walter Kaulfers, "Effect of the I.Q. on the Grades of One Thousand Students of Foreign Languages," School and Society, XXX (1929), pp. 163-64.

increased and surpassed the rate of mortality for all other secondary school subjects. The percentages of failure reported in the investigation were as follows: languages 19.5%, English 17.5%, history 17.0%, mathematics 12.0%, commercial studies 12.0%, and science 8.1%.[4]

According to Douglass, about one-half of those who enroll in the first year of foreign language never pursue their study any farther, and about three-fourths turn to other subjects after the second year. The conspicuous decrease in the number of students beyond the second year bears testimony to the discontinuance of language work by a large group of students immediately upon fulfillment of the minimum requirements in the subject. This circumstance did not speak very eloquently of the efficiency of the work in developing an appreciation of foreign languages, much less of an avocational interest in the continued pursuit of them.[5] Over-emphasis upon grammatical detail, too rapid advancement, over-concentration upon the college preparatory function, and maladjustment of the work to the interests and capacities of the students afforded ready explanations.[6]

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[4]Ralph L. John, "High School Failures," California Quarterly of Secondary Education, III (January, 1928), pp. 186-94.

[5]A. Douglass, Secondary Education (New York, Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1927), pp. 261-62.

[6]E. B. McCormick, "Studies of Failure," School Review, XXX (June, 1922), pp. 431-42.

Also in 1928, people suddenly began to wonder whether there actually existed such thing as "language talent."[7] Kaulfers came to the conclusion that any assumed special talent could be nothing but a peculiar "readiness" of certain regions of the brain cells. Language aptitude tests began to be developed, and Wilkins' prognostic test in modern languages was designed to predict the probable success of a student in foreign languages as shown by his ability to recognize and distinguish between various forms and constructions.[8]

In 1937, Emma Tallent, for her Master's thesis in romance languages at the University of Tennessee, undertook an investigation for the purpose of discovering the relationship between grades in modern foreign languages on the one hand, and intelligent quotients, Placement Test Scores, and English grades on the other. Manipulation of the data resulted in the following coefficients of correlation:

1. For MFL grades and intelligence quotients .211
2. For MFL grades and Placement Test Scores .487
3. For MFL grades and English grades .558

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[7] John W. Todd, "Is There a Language Talent?", Modern Language Journal, XIII (1928), pp. 7-10.

[8] Edith A. Patter, "Available Tests in Modern Foreign Languages," Modern Language Journal, XIV (1929), pp. 223-27.

The major fact which one notices on first glance is that the three correlations all run rather low. Such low coefficients are of course not strongly indicative of a decided relationship between the two variables of correlation; in order for such a relationship to be indicative the coefficient must be .80 or higher. However, a coefficient in the 50's may be said to indicate a probable relationship deserving of a certain amount of credence. The three correlations do not indicate a strong cause-and-effect relationship in any of the three calculations.[9]

Spoerl, in 1939, had found that there seems to be a definite sex difference in language learning ability: (a) in the case of the women, intelligence seems to be a significant factor; (b) in the case of the men, none of the factors studied seems to be a determinant, it is not intelligence.[10] The Ascendance-Submission Reaction Study Form for Women and Form for Men was administered because it was suggested that possibly the general attitude of the student might affect his reactions to foreign language study; it was thought that submissive people who are willing to accept suggestions and orders will be able to

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[9]Emma Tallent, "Three Coefficients of Correlation that Concern Modern Foreign Languages," Modern Language Journal, XXII (1938), pp. 591-94.

[10]Dorothy Tilden Spoerl, "Study of Some Possible Factors Involved in Foreign Language Learning," Modern Language Journal, XXIII (1939), pp. 428-31.

learn more adequately in the foreign language situation. This would naturally include an ability to accept the style and trend of alien discourse which might prove to be one of the stumbling blocks. The results were that there is no relationship between language learning ability and Ascendance-Submission. The study suggested the presence of diverse factors.

Up to 1948, four factors were used as a basis of prediction of success in foreign languages:

1. Selection of pupils on the basis of proficiency in the mother tongue.
2. Guidance of pupils on the basis of achievement in exploratory classes in general language.
3. Selection of students on the basis of mental ability. An I.Q. of 100 was prerequisite to success in foreign language work.
4. Selection of pupils by means of standardized tests of linguistic aptitude.

Dunkel, in his survey of the psychology of second language learning, limited his remarks to a consideration of the relevance of intelligence.[11] He felt that available evidence indicated that intelligence was not a major factor in determining success or failure in elementary language

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[11]H. B. Dunkel, Second Language Learning (New York, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1948), p. 120.

learning, but warned that a closer analysis of the criterion of performance might disclose that certain aspects of intelligence were important.

The literature on intelligence as a factor in foreign language learning achievement is fairly extensive. Most of the studies, in general, are in agreement about the existence of a positive relationship. Another popular area of research in foreign language learning has been the investigation of the relationship between verbal ability, or ability in the native language, and success in learning a foreign language. Studies made by Wittenborn and Larsen,[12] Williams and Leavitt,[13] Morgan,[14] Peters,[15] Traxler,[16] and Pimsleur[17] show that verbal ability in one's

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[12]J. R. Wittenborn and R. A. Larsen, "A Factorial Study of Achievement in College German," Journal of Educational Psychology, XXXV (1944), pp. 39-48.

[13]S. B. Williams and H. J. Leavitt, "Prediction of Success in Learning Japanese," Journal of Applied Psychology, XXXI (1947), pp. 164-68.

[14]W. J. Morgan, "A Clinical Approach to Foreign Language Achievement," Georgetown University Monogram Services on Linguistics, No. 4 (1953), pp. 15-21.

[15]H. C. Peters, "The Prediction of Success and Failure in Elementary Foreign Language Courses," Journal of Applied Psychology, XXXVII (1953), pp. 178-81.

[16]A. E. Traxler, "The Relation of Vocabulary and Grammar to Reading Achievement in Latin, French, and Spanish," Educational Review Bulletin, No. 8 (1947), pp. 61-65.

[17]Paul Pimsleur, "Predicting Success in High School Foreign Language Courses," Educational and Psychological Measurement, XXIII, No. 2 (1963), pp. 349-57.

native language is positively correlated with success in learning a foreign language. However, the extent of this correlation has often been found to be rather modest and to be quite variable depending on the foreign language in question and on the degree of advancement of the course. No clear distinction has been made between general intelligence and verbal ability.

Pitch discrimination also was investigated in order to establish if the ability to learn to pronounce foreign languages is related to the ability to discriminate pitch.

Dexter, in 1934, used the Seashore Pitch Discrimination Test and the Henmon-Nelson Test of Mental Ability, Form B, and concluded that:

> . . . comparatively low I.Q. accompanied by good pitch discrimination seems to result in reasonably successful work in French; whereas correspondingly low I.Q. accompanied by low ability to discriminate pitch leads to failure in French.[18]

The relationship between study habits and language learning was investigated by Wittenborn and Larsen in several studies and on the basis of a questionnaire and personal interview with each student, it was found that significantly more high achievers studied corrected

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[18] E. S. Dexter, "Pitch Discrimination and French Accent on the High School Level," Journal of Applied Psychology, XVIII (1934), pp. 717-20.

homework assignments and examinations, studied vocabulary in context, prepared their lessons daily and had time set aside everyday for studying.[19] His study indicated that student study habits exert their influence as a factor in foreign language learning.

Another factor regarding foreign language learning is motivation and attitudes. Studies by Wittenborn and Larsen,[20] Carroll,[21] Gardner and Lambert,[22] and Politzer[23] indicate that interest in languages in general and/or in the particular language being studied correlates positively with achievement. The influence of this variable appears to be modest but consistent. It was also found that maximum prediction of success in second-language acquisition was obtained from tests of verbal intelligence, intensity of motivation to learn the other language, students' purposes in studying that language, and linguistic aptitude. Therefore, one may state that the main contributing factors in learning a foreign language were found

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[19]Wittenborn and Larsen, op. cit., pp. 39-48.

[20]Ibid.

[21]J. B. Carroll, "A Factor Analysis of Two Foreign Language Batteries," Journal of General Psychology, LIX (1958), pp. 3-19.

[22]R. C. Gardner and W. E. Lambert, "Motivational Variables in Second-Language Acquisition," Modern Language Journal, XIII (1959), pp. 266-72.

[23]R. L. Politzer, "Assiduity and Achievement," Modern Language Journal, XLIV (1960), pp. 14-16.

to be I.Q. (sometimes referred to as verbal intelligence), interest (motivation), reasoning, word fluency, and pitch discrimination. According to Pimsleur, Mosberg, and Morrison, one of the few secure results of the research performed thus far is that the verbal intelligence factor appears to correlate about .45, meaning that it accounts for only about 20% of the variance in foreign language achievement.[24] Motivation indicates a positive relationship which may be as high as .40. Therefore, verbal intelligence and motivation together account for perhaps 35% of the variance in foreign language achievement.

There still remains 65% to be explained by other factors such as:

1. the learner's aptitudes
2. the learner's perseverance
3. the quality of instruction
4. the opportunity for learning.[25]

Jacobovits' findings are somewhat different. According to him the "learner factors" of aptitude, intelligence and perseverance determine up to 86% the

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[24]Paul Pimsleur, Ludwig Mosberg, and Andrew Morrison, "Student Factors in Foreign Language Learning," Modern Language Journal, XLVI (April, 1962), pp. 160-70.

[25]N. L. Gage, Handbook of Research on Teaching (Chicago, Rand McNally, 1963), pp. 1060-61.

achievement in second language learning.[26]

TABLE 1

LEARNING FACTORS AND PERCENTAGE CONTRIBUTION TO ACHIEVEMENT

Factors	Percentage Contribution to Achievement
Foreign Language Aptitude	33
Intelligence	20
Perseverance or Motivation	33
Others	14

Aptitude was measured by using four variables: phonetic decoding, grammatical sensitivity, rote memorization, and inductive language learning ability. The factors contributing to perseverance were: the importance of achievement to the person's sense of well being; the students' feeling about the teacher; interest in second language study; attitude toward foreign culture and socio-cultural attitudes of the community; and anomie and ethnocentrism.[27]

Methods of Instruction

During the past hundred years of modern language

[26]Leon A. Jacobovits, "Research Findings and Foreign Language Requirements in Colleges and Universities," Foreign Language Annals, II, No. 4 (1969),

[27]Northeast Conference on Foreign Languages and the New Student, Report of the Working Committee No. II, Menasha: George Banta Co., Inc., (1970), 68-69.

teaching in the United States the pendulum has swung from one extreme to the other. Prior to the turn of this century the most common method used was the grammatical-translation method which attempted by means of the study and memorization of rules of grammar and exceptions to these rules, to give a firm basis upon which to build. As each rule was mastered, vocabulary was learned and then used to translate sentences which tested complete knowledge of the rules. As soon as the grammar was mastered sufficiently, books containing excerpts from the classics, or the classics themselves, were read for the purpose of translation.[28] Living languages were treated as dead languages; their purpose was to discipline the mind, develop the memory, and train the individual in so-called logical thinking.

About 1866 a rival method became popular, one which discarded translation entirely in the teaching process. It was generally known as the natural method.[29] It stressed the spoken language which the grammar translation method had avoided; it eliminated technical grammar at the beginning of the course and used the foreign tongue to explain the meaning of new vocabulary and even grammatical

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[28]Report of the Committee of Twelve, A Critical Review of Methods of Teaching (Boston, Ginn and Company, 1900), pp. 14-16.

[29]Ibid., pp. 16-19.

principles which could not be taught in a functional way. No English was used by the instructor and the student was discouraged from using it himself. He was drilled in reading the foreign language aloud and was taught the meaning of the text by inference or by explanation, given in the language by the instructor. This educational "naturalism" is a reaction against the inflexible systematicism of the earlier teachers. This method was based on two general ideas:

1. that interest is most easily aroused by the actual use of the foreign tongue;
2. that a boy or a girl can best learn a new language in the manner in which an infant first acquires its native speech. Hence, the word "natural."

The two methods, the grammar and the natural method, remained in vogue for many years. In 1880, Francois Gouin published L'Art d'enseigner et d'Etudier les Langues and the new ideas embodied therein were soon adopted in this country. Swan and Betis translated the book, and the new method came to be known as the psychological method.[30] It consisted of a series of statements dealing with one subject but developing the action by the use of a different verb in each statement. O'Brien and La France, in

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[30]Francois Gouin, The Art of Teaching and Studying Languages (London, The Oxford Press, 1905), Translated by Howard Swan and Victor Betis.

their First Year French, have revived and modernized the idea; they use this method in the first ten lessons. The dialogue of Chapter I reads:

J'entre dans la salle de classe
Je regarde autour de moi
Je vois les élèves et le professeur
Je dis bonjour au professeur
Je prends ma place.[31]

The psychological method rests on the principle of the association of ideas and the habit of "mental visualization."

In all of nothern Europe, especially in Germany and the Scandinavian countries, the emphasis was put on pronunciation, and Dr. Wilhelm Vietor, professor of philology at the University of Marburg, was the champion of the scientific use of "phonetics as an aid in teaching the pronunciation of a foreign tongue."[32] By 1901, the phonetic method was incorporated in the "methode directe" and used in France. The sounds were studied by means of phonetic symbols which represented words or phrases. These phrases were combined into stories or dialogues.

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[31]K. L. O'Brien and M. S. La France, The First Year French (New York, Ginn and Company, 1960), p. 1.

[32]Wilhelm Vietor, "A New Method of Language Teaching," Educational Review, VI (1893), p. 351.

The object of the direct method was to teach the student to understand and speak the language; its distinguishing feature was to avoid the use of the student's native language.

After World War I many instructors and textbook authors sought to create a new method which included the best and most successful characteristics of all other methods which they called the eclectic or complete method.[33] It called for oral practice, reading aloud, questions and answers, and the use of audio-visual materials, but did not insist upon the elimination of translation. In a sense the teacher's intelligence and experience were to be his guide.

In 1929, Professor Coleman indicated that two years of language was the maximum taken by 87 per cent of the secondary school students and many educators felt that by limiting the objective to reading, more would be accomplished.[34] Since reading ability appeared to be the principal objective, classroom efforts during the first two years were centered primarily on developing the ability to read, and a reading method emphasizing translation and grammatical principles was in vogue.

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[33]Edmond A. Meras, A Language Teacher's Guide (New York, Harper and Row, 1962), p. 46.

[34]Algernon Coleman, The Teaching of Modern Foreign Languages in the United States (New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1929), p. 65.

During the past thirty years, the teaching of foreign languages in this country has followed a zigzag course. One method after another, one objective after another, has been pursued and abandoned. Thanks to the impact of the Army specialized training program a new shift to the oral approach was produced. Like many discoveries, this one is far from new; it was made years ago by the pioneers in the field of oral method, who emphasized the speaking skill.[35]

At the present time there are two major theories of foreign language learning which influence the methods of instruction. The are: the audio-lingual habit theory and the cognitive code-learning theory. The audio-lingual habit theory, which is more or less the "official" theory of the reform movement in foreign language teaching in the United States of America has the following principal ideas:

1. that since speech is primary and writing is secondary, the habits to be learned must be learned first of all as auditory discrimination responses and speech responses;
2. that habits must be automatized as much as possible so that they can be called forth without conscious attention;

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[35]William H. McClain, "Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Cleveland Plan," French Review, XVIII (1945), pp. 197-201.

3. that the automatization of habits occurs chiefly by practice, that is, by repetition.[36]

According to Carroll, the cognitive code-learning theory may be thought of as a modified grammar-translation theory. According to this theory, learning a language is a process of acquiring conscious control of the phonological, grammatical, and lexical patterns of the second language, through study and analysis of these patterns as a body of knowledge. The theory attaches more importance to the learner's understanding of the structure of the foreign language than to his facility in using that structure. It is believed that the student who has a proper degree of cognitive control over the structures of the language will develop a language facility automatically.[37] Also, the difference of these two theories lies in the fact of dealing with the findings of contrastive linguistics.

In the audio-lingual habit theory, knowledge of the differences between the learner's native language and the target language is of use to the teacher in making drills and patterns. Students need only to imitate the

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[36]John B. Carroll, "The Contributions of Psychological Theory and Educational Research to the Teaching of Foreign Languages," Modern Language Journal, XLIX (May, 1965), p. 278.

[37]Ibid.

foreign language sounds and patterns until, by practice, they master them. In the cognitive code-learning theory the difference between the native language and the target language should be carefully explained to the student, so that he may acquire conscious control of the target language patterns.

These two theories have brought about new characteristics in the teaching methods of foreign language:

1. Items are normally presented and learned in their spoken form before they are presented in their written form. For this reason contemporary teaching methods are often said to be audio-lingual in emphasis.

2. Contemporary teaching methods are making increased use of the results of scientific analysis of the contrast between the learner's language and the target language which is referred to as "contrastive structure analysis."

3. Contemporary doctrines stress the need of overlearning of language patterns by a special type of drill known as "pattern drill."

4. Contemporary foreign language teaching is the minimization of the use of the student's native language, and an increased amount of instruction is given by the "direct method."[38]

Nelson Brooks has suggested ways in which these objectives can be applied to the classroom. He recommends a modeling first of all new material by the teacher in the foreign language and demands that the mother tongue be

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[38]Meras, op. cit., pp. 53-89.

subordinated to the second language. Once the sounds have been mastered, graphic symbols may gradually be introduced.[39]

The audio-lingual approach is not a specific set of teaching techniques; it is rather a set of principles that can be applied differently by different teachers and in different classrooms. The particular technique that a teacher uses in audio-lingual instruction depends on a large number of factors, the background and age of learners, talents and strengths.

The above mentioned characterisitcs have promoted many practices in language teaching such as utilization of the tape recorder, the language laboratory, structural drill, and mimicry-memorization. The greatest boon to foreign language teaching from modern technology is the tape recorder which can present foreign language sounds and utterances with accuracy, fidelity, and endless patience. It is this essential item of equipment that has made the development of audio-visual and audio-lingual courses possible. In 1952 at Saint Cloud, the Centre de Recherches et d'Etudes pour la Diffusion du Francais worked on the production of audio-visual French courses,

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[39]Nelson Brooks, Language and Language Learning: Theory and Practice (2nd ed.; New York, Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1964), p. 123.

Voix et images de France and Bonjour Line.[40] In 1962, an American audio-visual course on cine-film began to be distributed, it was Parlons Francais. Also, the tape recorder made possible audio-lingual programmed courses in languages. Ferster and Sapon, in 1958, published the first audio-lingual visual program.[41]

The principal objective of all these methods is to develop in the student the ability to understand, speak, read, and write the target language. There are other methods and approaches that have had their vogue over the years, but only those which seem distinctive and have gained prominence have been mentioned. All have performed, and to some degree are still performing, a service in the teaching of languages, either directly or by their incorporation into some other technique, but the ones which are attuned to psychological and linguistical theories seem to be more productive. The audio-lingual habit theory has a resemblance to the Thorndikean association theory and to the Skinnerian shaping, while the cognitive code learning theory is reminiscent of certain Gestaltist movements in psychology. Both can contribute to more effective ways of

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[40] David H. Harding, The New Pattern of Language Teaching (London, London Press, 1967), p. 81

[41] A. Lumsdaine and R. Glaser, Teaching Machines and Programmed Learning: A Source Book (Washington, D.C., National Education Association, 1960), p. 250.

teaching foreign languages.

It seems that we are reaching the point where there will be agreement that the teaching of foreign languages is a profession with a methodology that is subject to scientific analysis, that the methodology can be taught to the novice teacher, and that it can be demonstrated to have beneficial results in terms of objectives.

The Language Teacher

It hardly needs research demonstration that the competence of the teacher in the foreign language will have an important bearing on the success of instruction, and attempts are being made to raise the standards of competency.

The training of the teacher is therefore the dominant factor in any educational system. More cogent and far reaching than curricula or methods, or even content, the formation of the teacher is the key to the success of an educational program. A poor teacher will impart but little to his pupils in spite of the best possible program, while a superior teacher will transcend a poor subject or faulty organization and, with a method all his own, will compel the intellectual development of his pupils.

This is true in the cultural subjects such as the modern foreign languages. They depend in large part on the

teacher for their success, and for the profit to be derived from them. The so-called utilitarian subjects--manual arts, vocational training, practical sciences--interest the pupil and are popular because of the immediate profit in view. The objective is tangible and will be sought even in spite of a poor teacher. The modern languages will have to fight for their place in the curriculum; if they fail to deliver what the public has a right to expect, out they go.

The preparation of the modern language teacher is of paramount importance to language learning but certification requirements in the first part of this century were extremely lax. Curtis Vail reported that Professor Purin, in his survey of 1925-1926, found that 28 states still issued blanket certificates to teachers while a mere 12 issued specialized certificates only.[42]

In the same year, there were 31 states where it was possible to teach a foreign language without any previous study of the language; three states required six semester hours of preparation for their language teachers; one required eight semester hours; one required ten semester hours; six required twelve semester house; and one, in addition to the twelve semester hours, demanded a

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[42]Curtis C. D. Vail, "State Requirements for Language Teachers," Modern Language Journal, XXIX (October, 1945), p. 513.

speaking ability of the language from its teachers; two required fifteen semester hours; one required eighteen semester hours; and one required twenty-four semester hours. The state of Mississippi was not included in this report.

In 1942, there were only four states which had no specific requirements for their language teachers; six required ten semester hours; ten required twelve semester hours; nine required fifteen semester hours; two required sixteen semester hours; five required eighteen semester hours; two required twenty semester hours; two required twenty-one semester hours; eight required twenty-four semester hours; one of these demanded, in addition, the passing of a written and oral examination; and one required twenty-six semester hours.[43]

By 1961, a survey taken in thirty-three states showed that almost 99.2% of the modern foreign language teachers had the Bachelor's degree, 29.9% had the Master's degree, exactly half of them had traveled in countries whose languages they taught, 11.3% had sixteen semester hours of preparation, 25.2% had twenty-four semester hours, 18.7% had thirty semester hours, and 44.8% had over thirty semester hours.[44] Although in all the states a teacher is

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[43] Ibid.

[44] Donald D. Walsh, "The Preparation of Modern Foreign Language Teachers," Modern Language Journal, XLVIII (October, 1964), pp. 352-56.

required to have a college major, there is rarely any rule which would prevent a teacher with a major in English or a minor in history from being compelled to teach one class in language if the need happened to occur. Such local arrangements are entirely left to the authority of the local principal.

Without any doubt, World War II, the position of the United States as a world leader, and the leadership of the Modern Language Association have contributed to a renaissance of language studies.

In December, 1951, the Modern Language Association reasserted its original policy of including among its official concerns pedagogical matters involving modern languages, matters that it had ignored since the 1920's.[45] As the first decade ended, the foreign language teachers could look back with gratification on what had been accomplished. William Riley Parker published his document, The National Interest and Foreign Languages, and Congress passed the National Defense Education Act. New teaching methods, techniques, and materials were developed, and the MLA Foreign Language Proficiency Tests for Teachers and Advanced Students were devised.

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[45] Archibald T. MacAllister, "The Preparation of College Teachers of Modern Foreign Languages," PMLA, II (May, 1964), p. 29.

High school principals were informed in 1954, in their professional magazine, about the proper qualifications of the language teacher; it was stated that the foreign language teacher should possess:

1. An upright character, of complete integrity, fit to be a model for young people; and an interesting, vibrant, well-adjusted personality, such as will stimulate attention and interest in the classroom.

2. A well-balanced liberal education and a thorough knowledge of our own American culture, insuring the ability to correlate the intellectual experiences of the pupils in the classroom with their outside interests, and to interpret wisely the complex patterns of our twentieth century civilization.

3. A reasonably correct pronunciation of the foreign language. A study of phonetics will assist this. The correctness of the teacher's pronunciation must be habitual and natural; American patterns of accent and intonation must be completely surmounted.

4. A considerable oral facility. This does not mean native fluency nor mere glibness with tourist phrases. The teacher should be able to make the language live for his pupils and to conduct class discussion on mature topics in the foreign language.

5. A systematic knowledge of the grammar and syntax acquired through advanced work in grammar and style and by complete familiarity with the spoken and written idiom.

6. An acquaintance with philology and descriptive linguistics, from the point of view of English as well as the foreign language, for greater effectiveness in presenting grammar, vocabulary, and the contribution of the foreign language to English.

7. A basic knowledge of the foreign country, its geography, politics, economics, religion, social structure, extending beyond the superficial impressions of a tourist; also a personal and genuine understanding of the spirit of the foreign literature through extensive reading of its masterpieces. All this should be possessed, not primarily in order to teach these subjects in class, but also to insure the teacher's thorough understanding of another great modern nation and his ability to show his pupils how that nation has contributed to their cultural heritage and can enrich the experiences of their own lives in terms of their own culture.

8. A coordinated knowledge of the history, principles and methods of education and of educational psychology, adequate to give the teacher a professional understanding of his pupils, a perception of his general objectives, and a realization of the relationship between his subject and the other parts of the curriculum.

9. A systematic introduction to the special methods and techniques of teaching languages. The teacher should be familiar with recent progress in the field and most effective approaches, materials, and equipment. He should know how to use the tools for measuring and evaluating his effectiveness and the progress of each pupil. The completely trained teacher should already have given proof, in supervised practice teaching, that he can be successful in actual service.

10. Language teachers in elementary schools should have substantially the same training, except for less emphasis on advanced grammar, linguistics and literature; but the greater insistence on child psychology and on the techniques and methods of teaching languages to small children.[46]

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[46] A Committee Report of the National Commission for Teacher Education and Professional Standards: "Qualifications of Foreign Language Teachers," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, XXXVIII (December, 1954), pp. 91-98.

The thorn in the side of language instruction on the secondary school level has been the fact that for many years schools have been able to assign all or part of their language programs to teachers who were well aware that they lacked sufficient preparation. Of course it should be pointed out that secondary school administrators have frequently found themselves in a sorry predicament, especially in the period of the two World Wars. In World War I they were faced with a surplus of German teachers on their staffs, coupled with a great shortage of French and Spanish teachers; and in World War II Spanish had experienced another boom while both French and German had receded. The only recourse has often been to give Spanish language classes to teachers who had college minors acquired with nine or twelve college credits. As a result, some teachers in towns and villages taught two subjects--a foreign language and English or social studies.[47]

Administrators were made cognizant that the language teacher of today has to be thoroughly at home in the language skills he wants to teach. In the words of Nelson Brooks, the foreign language teacher is

> aside from the teacher of music, or dancing, or art, the only member of his faculty who is

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[47]Stephen Freeman, "What About the Teacher?", Modern Language Journal, XXXIII (April, 1949), pp. 255-62.

> required to have a practitioner's knowledge of the discipline he teaches, while in the intellectual areas of his subject no less is expected of him in ability and training than of any teacher in the other academic subjects.[48]

In the classroom, the modern foreign language teacher is most often at one and the same time the linguist and the native informant.

In 1955, the Steering Committee of the Foreign Language Program of the Modern Language Association of America issued a statement of what they consider minimal, good, and superior qualifications for a secondary school teacher of a modern langauge and hoped that the teacher of a modern language

> (1) will have the personal qualities which make an effective teacher, (2) has received a well-balanced education, including a knowledge of our own American culture, and (3) has received the appropriate training in professional education, psychology, and secondary school methods.[49]

The 1959 report of the Northeast Conference stated:

> Teachers at both the secondary and college levels will have to be fluent in the foreign language. Teachers, particularly in the early stages of the sequence, will need to understand the functions of imitations, repetition, and variation of speech

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[48]Brooks, op. cit., p. 61.

[49]Steering Committee of the Foreign Language Program of the Modern Language Association, "Qualifications for Secondary School Teachers of Modern Foreign Language," PMLA, LXX (September, 1955), pp. 46-49.

> patterns as essential learning procedures and must be trained in the skillful use of a variety of techniques. Teachers will have to be conscious of the following facts (1) that language is an aspect of cultural behavior, (2) that it is a means of communication between peoples of different cultures. . . . Teachers will need to broaden their professional experience to include a knowledge of linguistics, anthropology and psychology as keys to a fuller understanding of the relationship between language and other aspects of culture.[50]

The National Defense Education Act of 1958 made specific provisions for teacher training institutes in order to improve foreign language teaching in the United States, and set the following objectives for their institutes:

1. To increase the participants' audio-lingual proficiency in the foreign language;
2. To give the participants a more thorough knowledge and a deeper appreciation of the general culture of the country whose language they are studying;
3. To show the participants how linguistics can have practical value in teaching;
4. To show the value of the language laboratory and other audio-visual equipment in language instruction and to give practical demonstrations of their uses;
5. To acquaint the participants with the new methods and materials;
6. To arrange for the participants to observe a demonstration class of high school pupils

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[50] 1959 Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Language, Reports of the Working Committee, "Assumptions and Implications," pp. 2-7.

taught daily through the audio-lingual approach and the materials known as A-LM;

7. To give the participants in the reading and writing clinic a chance to develop their reading and writing ability;

8. To prove clearly to the participants the need for more masterful teaching in secondary schools in order to help them awaken in their students a greater desire to learn languages more thoroughly.[51]

In December, 1963, the Modern Language Association prepared the following statement with the purpose of identifying and clarifying acceptable standards of teachers' preparation:

> Only selected students should be admitted to a teacher-preparation program, and those selected should have qualities of intellect, character, and personality that will make them effective teachers. The training of the future teacher must make him a well educated person with a sound knowledge of United States culture, the foreign culture and literature and the differences between the two cultures. It must also enable him to:
> a) understand the foreign language spoken at normal tempo;
> b) speak the language intelligibly and with an adequate command of vocabulary and syntax;
> c) read the language with immediate comprehension and without translation;
> d) write the language with clarity and reasonable correctness;
> e) understand the nature of language and language learning;
> f) understand the learner and psychology of learning;

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[51] National Defense Language Institute Program, A Manual for Participating Institutions, Title VI, U. S. Government Printing Office (Washington, D. C., 1964), p. 4.

g) understand the evolving objectives of education in the United States and the place of foreign language learning in this context.[52]

In addition to possessing the requisite knowledge and skills, the language teacher must be able to:

1. Develop in the students a progressive control of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).
2. Present the language as an essential element of the foreign culture and show that culture is similar to and from that of the United States.
3. Make judicious selections and uses of approaches, methods, techniques, aids, materials, and equipment for language teaching.
4. Present the foreign literature in such a way as to bring the students to understand it and to appreciate its values.
5. Correlate his teaching with that in other areas.
6. Evaluate the progress and diagnose the deficiencies of student performance.[53]

The MLA leadership in identifying and clarifying acceptable standards of teachers' preparation established the directions of the training programs and encouraged small college departments to take the steps necessary in order to include courses in five areas: language skills, literature, culture, linguistics, and education. This development

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[52]MLA, "Standards for Teacher Education Programs in Modern Foreign Languages," PMLA, LXXIX (September, 1964), p. A-12.

[53]Ibid.

helped: (1) to raise the standards, (2) to turn out better prepared language teachers, and (3) to accelerate the trend toward setting national standards and patterns.

At the present time students who have completed an approved program are recommended by the training institution to the state department of education which is the licensing agency. According to Wilmarth Starr there is no necessity of confining approved programs to specific courses, as now usually happens. It would be more sensible to define what is expected of a qualified teacher, to devise ways of evaluating these defined skills and knowledge, and when a teacher candidate has satisfactorily demonstrated his proficiency he should be recommended for a license.[54]

Fortunately, reliable, objective measuring instruments already exist and some colleges and universities already use the MLA Foreign Language Proficiency Tests for Teachers and Advanced Students either for the teacher candidates or for their majors, or both.

Thanks to the assistance of the Modern Language Association Foreign Language Program, the National Defense Education Act, and numerous educators, there have been

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[54]Wilmarth H. Starr, "MLA Foreign Language Proficiency Tests for Teachers and Advanced Students," PMLA, LXXVIII (September, 1962), p. 31.

many considerable advances made in the preparation of the modern language teacher. He must be a practitioner in his specialty, thoroughly at home in the understanding, speaking, reading, and writing of the foreign language, and must possess a dynamic personality in guiding, directing, coaching, and motivating his students to attain competency in a modern language.

CHAPTER III

COMPARISONS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE ATTRITION

Foreign Language Attrition in School District A

The primary purpose of this study was to uncover a body of information on attrition in foreign language in the secondary schools of District A and compare it with that of Districts B, C, and D, schools in the county having, respectively, the same, a higher, and a lower socio-economic background.

The writer, in order to select the schools having the prescribed socio-economic background, has ranked the school districts in Erie County, New York, on the basis of: (1) amount of wealth of the community per pupil, representing the "ability of the district," (2) taxation on true valuation per pupil, representing "the effort of the district," (3) number of college graduates, professionals, and managers residing in the community, (4) median home value in the district, (5) median income per family, and (6) per cent of graduates continuing their education after high school in 1968.

In the ranking, School Districts A and B represent the average of the communities, while C and D represent communities, the first having a higher and the other a lower socio-economic background.

In order to accumulate the data on attrition, four record sources were used: grade books, junior high school permanent mark sheets, senior high school permanent mark sheets, and the permanent record cards.

Comparison of Foreign Language Attrition of School District A with that of School Districts B, C, and D

TABLE 2

COMPARISON OF ATTRITION IN THE FRENCH FOUR YEAR SEQUENCE

School District	No. of Pupils	Percentage of Attrition per Grade				Mean
		9	10	11	12	
A	20	10.0	50.3	55.6	..	28.9
B	115	19.2	45.2	70.6	..	33.7
C	56	14.3	31.3	44.4	..	22.4
D	38	29.0	62.9	70.0	..	40.4

Chi Square = 13.14*

*Chi Square exceeding 7.82 is significant at the .05 level, 3 degrees of difference.

TABLE 3

COMPARISON OF ATTRITION IN THE GERMAN FOUR-YEAR SEQUENCE

School District	No. of Pupils	Percentage of Attrition per Grade				Mean
		9	10	11	12	
A	17	17.5	42.8	50.0	..	27.5
B	43	25.6	53.2	73.3	..	38.0
C	38	15.8	31.3	45.4	..	23.1
D	Not Offered					

Chi Square = 12.06*

TABLE 4

COMPARISON OF ATTRITION IN THE SPANISH FOUR-YEAR SEQUENCE

School District	No. of Pupils	Percentage of Attrition per Grade				Mean
		9	10	11	12	
A	19	21.1	40.0	44.4	20.0	31.4
B	61	29.7	50.8	70.7	..	37.8
C	42	16.6	28.5	40.0	..	22.5
D	52	25.0	76.9	100.0	Not Offered	51.3

Chi Square = 23.4*

*Chi Square exceeding 7.82 is significant at the .05 level, 3 degrees of difference.

TABLE 5

COMPARISON OF ATTRITION IN THE LATIN FOUR-YEAR SEQUENCE

School District	No. of Pupils	Percentage of Attrition per Grade				Mean
		9	10	11	12	
A	35	34.3	68.0	100.0	..	50.5
B	67	32.9	66.7	100.0	..	49.9
C	11	9.1	40.0	66.6	..	28.9
D	30	40.0	77.9	100.0	..	54.4

Chi Square = 24.6*

TABLE 6

COMPARISON OF ATTRITION IN THE FRENCH THREE-YEAR SEQUENCE

School District	Pupils	Percentage of Attrition per Grade			Mean
		10	11	12	
A	20	25.0	46.6	25.0	32.2
B	25	28.0	55.5	12.5	32.0
C	79	11.0	38.3	5.4	18.2
D	15	26.6	54.5	20.0	33.7

Chi Square = 7.74*

*Chi Square exceeding 7.82 is significant at the .05 level, 3 degrees of difference.

TABLE 7

COMPARISON OF ATTRITION IN THE GERMAN THREE-YEAR SEQUENCE

School District	No. of Pupils	Percentage of Attrition per Grade			Mean
		10	11	12	
A	19	26.3	49.8	25.0	33.7
B	21	28.6	73.3	..	33.9
C	33	18.2	33.2	..	17.2
D	Not Offered	..	..	..	..

Chi Square = 7.50*

TABLE 8

COMPARISON OF ATTRITION IN THE LATIN THREE-YEAR SEQUENCE

School District	No. of Pupils	Percentage of Attrition per Grade			Mean
		10	11	12	
A	10	20.0	74.0	..	31.3
B	18	33.4	66.7	..	33.3
C	14	35.7	44.4	..	26.7
D	12	41.7	71.5	..	7.7

Chi Square = 4.96*

*Chi Square exceeding 7.82 is significant at the .05 level, 3 degrees of difference.

TABLE 9

COMPARISON OF ATTRITION IN THE SPANISH THREE-YEAR SEQUENCE

School District	Pupils	Percentage of Attrition per Grade			Mean
		10	11	12	
A	56	37.5	40.0	23.8	33.7
B	35	34.0	56.5	16.7	35.7
C	45	31.0	41.9	5.0	25.9
D	26	34.6	52.9	25.0	37.5

Chi Square = 4.98*

Frank Grittner, Supervisor of Modern Foreign Languages at the Wisconsin State Department of Public Instruction, in December, 1968, stated in Foreign Language Annals that "the last nationwide report on the per cent of students electing fourth-year courses revealed the following: Spanish 4.5%, French 7.9%, German 6.9% and Latin 3.4%."[1] On the same page, he explained that average continuation for all languages falls well below 7% when all first-year pupils in 1962 are compared with all fourth-year pupils in 1965.

This statement could be misleading because there are many students in the United States enrolled for the

[1]Vol. II, page 205 of "Maintaining Foreign Language Skills for the Advanced-Course Drop-out."

*Chi Square exceeding 7.82 is significant at the .05 level, 3 degrees of difference.

first level of the language in the tenth grade, especially if the school district is organized in a 6-3-3 plan. The writer, after having surveyed four suburban school districts, reports in the following Table the percentage of students who completed the fourth level of the four-year sequence.

TABLE 10

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO COMPLETED THE FOURTH LEVEL OF THE FOUR-YEAR SEQUENCE

Language	School			
	A	B	C	D
French	20.0	13.0	32.1	..
German	23.5	9.3	34.0	..
Latin	..	..	18.1	..
Spanish	26.3	11.4	35.7	...

The percentage of students who completed the five levels in the six-year sequence is: French 26%, and German 25.6%.

The tables in this chapter suggest that:

1. Attrition in modern language enrollments reaches its highest point at the end of the Third Level.
2. Attrition is significantly small in the First and Second Levels of the Five-Year and Six-Year Sequences.

3. School D, situated in a low socio-economic community, had an attrition in modern langauges significantly higher than Schools A, B, or C.
4. School C, situated in a high socio-economic community, had an attrition in modern languages significantly less than Schools A, B, or D.
5. Schools A and B, situated in average socio-economic communities had an attrition in modern language enrollments lower than that of School D, but higher than that of School C.
6. The longer the sequence, the smaller the attrition per level; the shorter the sequence, the higher the attrition per level.
7. The attrition in Latin was substantially higher than that of modern languages, and in the Three-Year Sequence reached its highest point at the end of the Second Level.
8. The critical point in dropping foreign language study occurs at the end of the Second and Third Levels.

CHAPTER IV

TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE PROBLEM

Coordination and Articulation

Why did students drop foreign languages at the end of their Second or Third Level? This is the question asked and these were the opinions given by the foreign language teachers in School District A:

1. Tendency of guidance personnel not to recommend languages, especially Latin.
2. Some colleges require only two years of a foreign language.
3. Tendency of pupils to elect the easy courses.
4. Present-day emphasis on materialism and utilitarianism.
5. Some students feel that they are not very well prepared for the next level and, consequently, discontinue the study of the language.
6. After two years, students feel that they have had a basic foundation.
7. Lack of interest.
8. Regents examinations given at the end of the

Third Level for modern languages, and at the end of the Second Level for Latin.

9. Third Level language study is too hard.
10. Present-day emphasis on mathematics and science.
11. General lack of understanding of the role of foreign languages in the world.[1]

The same type of question asked of the foreign language teachers was also asked of forty graduates of School District A, who had dropped foreign language after the Second or Third Level of instruction. Their I.Q.'s ranged from 105 to 118, and the question asked was: "Why did you discontinue the study of the foreign language while you were in high school?" The reasons they gave for dropping the foreign language are described in the following table.

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[1]School District A, Foreign Language Departmental Minutes, November 20, 1967.

TABLE 11

STUDENTS' REASONS FOR DISCONTINUING THE STUDY OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Number of Occurrences	Reasons
20	Completed the language requirement for college
15	The second (or third) year was hard; afraid of not succeeding in the next level
10	Advised by guidance counselor to take a different subject because my marks were not "too high"
8	Preferred another subject
7	Not interested in continuing
6	Preferred to take a vocational elective
6	Did not like the teacher
5	Tried to avoid hard subjects in my senior year
5	Held part-time job and no time for subjects requiring work
2	Advised by the language teacher not to continue and to start a new language

From the teachers' and students' responses, there emerged some points which deserve careful consideration:

1. 50% of the pupils dropped the study of the foreign language because they had satisfied the requirement for college entrance.

2. 37.5% of the pupils discontinued their study because their second year of instruction was "hard," and they were afraid to try the third year.
3. It seemed that teachers relied on language requirements to keep up enrollments, yet they knew that their goals were too ambitious and discouraging for the maturity level of some students.

At this point, with the purpose of determining the role that articulation and sequencing played in the foreign language program, the writer interviewed fifty students who dropped the study of the language at the end of the second and third levels while they were still juniors or seniors in high school. Those interviewed were between 16 and 18 years of age; their attitudes were serious in discussing foreign language instruction.

In the interview, certain criticisms were voiced frequently. The students mentioned how difficult it was to adapt to the methods and expectations of different teachers, whereas many of the teachers ascribed students' difficulty to their "poor knowledge" of the subject and to "lack of good study habits."

Also, in the interview, students often mentioned how "hard" the transition from junior high to senior high

school was for them. Most of those who began a language in junior high had trouble a year or two later when they came together in the second- or third-level language classes with students who began in senior high school.

The validity of these complaints was revealed by comparing the grades received in second-year language courses by three groups of students having approximately equivalent I.Q.'s. The groups were formed by 25 ninth graders who had had both levels of the language in junior high school, 25 tenth graders who had had the first level in the junior high and the second level in the senior high, and 25 eleventh-twelfth graders who had had both years in the senior high. The tenth graders had significantly lower foreign language grades than did either of the other two groups.

TABLE 12

MARKS RECEIVED IN SECOND-YEAR LANGUAGE COURSES BY THREE GROUPS OF STUDENTS

Grades	No. of Students	Mean I. Q.	Number of Students Receiving				
			A	B	C	D	F
7, 8, 9	25	112.5	4	12	6	3	..
9 - 10	25	112.6	1	6	11	7	..
10 - 11	25	111.8	3	10	9	3	..

This finding substantiates the students' belief that the transition from junior high to senior high school may cause poorer performance.

Since sequencing was mentioned so prominently by teachers and students, the writer compared the first- and second-year grades of one hundred students selected randomly in five school subjects in order to see which school subject depends more on sequencing. The results are in accord with a study made by Pimsleur, Sundland, and McIntyre, in which it is stated that foreign languages "are clearly more dependent upon sequencing than any other subject."[2] The findings show that:

1. 45% of the students who received an A in the first year of foreign languages received a lower grade in the second year.
2. 50% of the students who received a B or a C grade in the first year received a lower one in the second year.
3. Only math comes close to being as sequential a subject, while English, history, and science are much less so.

The following table illustrates the sequencing of the five school subjects.

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[2]Paul Pimsleur, Donald Sunland, and Ruth D. McIntyre, Under-Achievement in Foreign Language Learning (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1966), p. 9.

TABLE 13

SEQUENCING OF FIVE SCHOOL SUBJECTS

School Subject	Symbol	% of Students with Lower Grade in Second Year	First Year Grade			
			A	B	C	D
Foreign Languages	*	60				
Math	o	50			*	
English	+		*	*		
Science	v	40	o	v		
History	=		+	o		
		30	v	=	o	
			=			*
		20		+	v	
					+	o
		10			=	v
						+
		0				=

Success of any foreign language program depends to a large extent upon the smooth and continuous transition from one level to another. This sequential continuity is at one and the same time a great challenge and a great frustration. It is a challenge because of its utmost importance in developing in the students any kind of competency in another language. It is a frustration because of the many inherent man-made barriers to continuity and ultimately to the success of a foreign

language program. It becomes difficult to establish reasonable uniformity in regard to standards, objectives, methods, course content, and continuity in a foreign language program from one year to another. What then is the key to any successful approach to a sequential study? There is no single answer. There is no single key. Rather, there are many keys, and if any of them are missing the door to success cannot be opened very wide.

Obstacles to good language teaching and to articulation may arise from any of the following interdependent sources:

1. Lack of teacher readiness to accept recent developments in language teaching.
2. Lack of clearly defined goals.
3. Lack of unified basic methodology.
4. Lack of properly selected materials.
5. Lack of sequential planning.
6. Lack of proper testing and measurement.
7. Lack of supervision.

How true seem the words of Stephen Romine, Dean of the School of Education, University of Colorado, as reported by Seay:

> If private, creative enterprise were operated with no more articulation and coordination than typically characterizes American Education, it

> would soon fail or go bankrupt. The assembly of an automobile, the farming of a tract of land, the construction of a home, and the orchestration of a musical composition, as examples, require careful planning and persistent evaluation aimed at efficiency and relatedness of effort. Millions of dollars are spent annually for this type of articulation. Is the education of our young men and young women less important?[3]

According to Dr. Romine, articulation in education is coordination of effort in those areas in the field where there are joint concerns and responsibilities between more or less independent units. Good articulation insures smooth transition, continuity of the educative process, efficient development of pupils, and maximum use of resources. It minimizes conflict and time-consuming readjustments which frequently result in confusion and sometimes in frustrations. It reduces failures and eventually dropouts.[4]

The Foreign Language Teacher

The students interviewed were at times critical of some foreign language teachers, and certain complaints occurred often enough to merit discussion:

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[3]C. W. Seay, "High School - College Articulation," National Association of Secondary School Principals, XLVIII (September, 1964), p. 57.

[4]Ibid., pp. 57-58.

1. Some students noticed that some teachers used the foreign language more often and more fluently than others;
2. The students wanted their teachers to be patient, kind, and understanding, and to take a personal interest in them;
3. The teacher who gained their respect was well organized, fairly strict, and responsive to their interests and abilities;
4. Other criticisms were expressed of teachers who were inconsistent with discipline, who assigned homework and did not follow up on it.

The writer listened with interest, but many of the complaints could be ascribed to the natural tendency of the dropout to find reasons for his difficulty rather than his own shortcomings. In order to observe the classroom climate, the writer used Flanders' classroom analysis, which is unique in that it preserves a certain amount of information regarding the sequence of behavior. Using the system of ten categories shown in Table 14[5] the observer at the end of each three-second period decided

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[5]N. A. Flanders, Teacher Influence, Pupil Attitudes, and Achievement (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1960), U. S. Office of Education Coop. Res. Project N. 397, Mimeographed, p. 8.

which category best represented the "communication behavior" during that three seconds and wrote down the number of that category while observing the next three-second period.

Table 14, which follows, lists the ten categories in Flanders' Verbal Interaction Analysis.

TABLE 14

FLANDERS' VERBAL INTERACTION CLASSIFICATIONS

TEACHER TALK	INDIRECT INFLUENCE	1.* ACCEPTS FEELING: accepts and clarifies the feeling tone of the students in a non-threatening manner. Feelings may be positive or negative. Predicting or recalling feelings are included. 2.* PRAISES OR ENCOURAGES: praises or encourages student action or behavior. Jokes that release tension, not at the expense of another individual, nodding head or saying "un hum?" or "go on" are included. 3.* ACCEPTS OR USES IDEAS OF STUDENT: clarifying, building, or developing ideas suggested by a student. As teacher brings more of his own ideas into play, shift to category five. 4.* ASKS QUESTIONS: asking a question about content or procedure with the intent that a student answer
	DIRECT INFLUENCE	5.* LECTURING: giving facts or opinions about content or procedures; expressing his own ideas, asking rhetorical questions. 6.* GIVING DIRECTIONS: directions, commands, or orders to which a student is expected to comply. 7.* CRITICIZING OR JUSTIFYING AUTHORITY: statements intended to change student behavior from non-acceptable to acceptable pattern; bawling someone out; stating why the teacher is doing what he is doing; extreme self-reference.

TABLE 14--Continued

STUDENT TALK	8.*	STUDENT TALK-RESPONSE: talk by students in response to teacher. Teacher initiates the contact or solicits student statement.
	9.*	STUDENT TALK-INITIATION: talk by students which they initiate; if "calling on" student is only to indicate who may talk next, observer must decide whether studentwanted to talk. If he did, use this category.
	10.*	SILENCE OR CONFUSION: pauses, short periods of silence, and periods of confusion in which communication cannot be understood by the observer.

*There is NO scale implied by these numbers. Each number is classificatory; it designated a particular kind of communication event. To write these numbers down during observation is to enumerate, not to judge a position on the scale.

The numbers of the categories were recorded in sequence in a column and when there was a major change in class formation, the communication pattern, or the subject under discussion, a double line was drawn and the time was indicated. The series of behavior between two double lines represented different activities planned by the teacher during the lesson and they are called "episodes."[6]

[6]N. L. Gage, Handbook of Research on Teaching (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1963), p. 271.

Categories 1 to 4 represented indirect influence in varying degrees, category 1 allowing the pupil the most freedom, and category 4 the least. Categories 4 to 7 represented increasing amounts of direct influence. Categories 8 and 9 represented different levels of teacher influence, while category 10 is an escape category for unclassifiable three-seconds periods.[7] A small "e" was recorded after the number if English was used.

The observer was provided with a matrix for recording interaction analysis so that the operation of recording the classroom behavior was made easier. With the observation completed, the observer was able to objectify some characteristics of the teaching:

1. What percentage of the class time did the teacher talk?
2. What percentage of the class time did the students talk?
3. Did the teacher use more indirect or direct influence during a lesson?
4. Was the teacher more indirect or direct in the way he motivated and controlled the class?
5. What kind of immediate feedback did the teacher give to pupils after they responded?

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[7]Flanders, op. cit., p. 9.

6. To what extent did pupils participate for extended periods of time?
7. What behaviors did the teacher use to elicit pupil response in the class?
8. To what extent were pupils given the opportunity to bring in their own ideas?
9. What behaviors did the teacher use more extensively in communicating?[8]

Also, by counting the small "e's" it was possible to record the length of time that English was used in the classroom.

The following tables illustrate the interaction analysis observed by the writer.

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[8]Gertrude Moskowitz, "The Effects of Training Foreign Language Teachers in Interaction Analysis," Foreign Language Annals, II, No. 2 (March, 1968), pp. 221-22.

TABLE 15

FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEVEL I, INTERACTION ANALYSIS-TEACHER A

Interaction		Mean of Occurrences	
1.	Teacher accepts feeling	53	
2.	Teacher praises / encourages	75	Indirect
3.	Teacher accepts / uses ideas	35	
4.	Teacher asks questions	152	
		Total 315	
5.	Teacher lectures	396	
6.	Teacher gives directions	181	Direct
7.	Teacher criticizes / justifies	353	
		Total 930	
8.	Students respond	288	Student talk
9.	Student initiates	49	
		Total 337	
10.	Silence / confusion	83	

Time in which English was used: 25 minutes out of a possible 80

TABLE 16

FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEVEL I, INTERACTION ANALYSIS-TEACHER B

Interaction	Mean of Occurrences	
1. Teacher accepts feeling	75	
2. Teacher praises / encourages	148	Indirect
3. Teacher accepts / uses ideas	57	
4. Teacher asks questions	182	
	Total 462	
5. Teacher lectures	427	
6. Teacher gives directions	96	Direct
7. Teacher criticizes / justifies	194	
	Total 717	
8. Students respond	378	Student talk
9. Students initiate	76	
	Total 454	
10. Silence / confusion	62	

Time in which English was used: 18 minutes out of a possible 80

TABLE 17

FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEVEL II, INTERACTION ANALYSIS-TEACHER C

Interaction	Mean of Occurrences	
1. Teacher accepts feeling	74	
2. Teacher praises / encourages	53	Indirect
3. Teacher accepts / uses ideas	48	
4. Teacher asks questions	172	
	Total 347	
5. Teacher lectures	426	
6. Teacher gives directions	73	Direct
7. Teacher criticizes / justifies	407	
	Total 906	
8. Student responds	124	Student talk
9. Student initiates	92	
	Total 216	
10. Silence / confusion	125	

Time in which English was used: 30 minutes out of a possible 80

TABLE 18

FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEVEL II, INTERACTION ANALYSIS-TEACHER D

Interaction		Mean of Occurrences	
1.	Teacher accepts feeling	91	
2.	Teacher praises / encourages	55	Indirect
3.	Teacher accepts / uses ideas	137	
4.	Teacher asks questions	178	
		Total 461	
5.	Teacher lectures	576	
6.	Teacher gives directions	60	Direct
7.	Teacher criticizes / justifies	253	
		Total 889	
8.	Student responds	208	Student talk
9.	Student initiates	74	
		Total 282	
10.	Silence / confusion	52	

Time in which English was used: 16 minutes out of a possible 80

Tables 15, 16, 17, and 18 indicate that:

1. The use of English in the classroom varied from teacher to teacher.
2. The amount of "Teacher Talk" varied and in some instances was four times greater than "Student Talk."
3. Teachers used more direct influence during the lesson rather than indirect.
4. Teachers sparingly praised and encouraged pupils' responses.
5. Teachers used more direct behaviors in their overall interaction patterns, especially in motivating and controlling the class.

These findings are in accordance with what the students said in the interview when they mentioned that some teachers used the foreign language more often than others and that some of them were not sympathetic and understanding. In other words, teachers were not using indirect influence in their lessons but a direct one; the classroom was "instructor-centered" rather than "student-centered." The teaching methods used by the teacher as reflected in Flanders' Interaction Analysis revealed that type of structure. Table 19 describes the indirect method of influence and the direct one.[9]

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[9]Robert P. Anderson and Bill Kell, "Student Attitudes About Participation in Classroom Groups," Journal of Educational Research, XLVIII (December, 1954), pp. 255-56.

TABLE 19

DIMENSIONS UPON WHICH STUDENT-CENTERED AND INSTRUCTOR-CENTERED METHODS MAY DIFFER

Student-Centered	Instructor-Centered
Goals	
1. Determined by the group	1. Determined by the teacher
2. Emphasis upon attitudinal changes	2. Emphasis upon intellectual changes
3. Attempts to develop group cohesiveness	3. No attempt to develop group cohesiveness
Classroom Activities	
1. Much student participation	1. Much teacher participation
2. Student-student interaction	2. Teacher-student interaction
3. Teacher accepts erroneous or irrelevant student contributions	3. Teacher corrects, criticizes, or rejects erroneous or irrelevant student contributions
4. De-emphasis of tests and grades	4. Traditional use of tests and grades
5. Teacher interprets feelings and ideas of class member when it is necessary for class progress	5. Teacher avoids interpretation of feelings

The advocates of student-centered or group-centered teaching introduced another category of objectives not usually considered in traditional classes:

development of skills in group membership and leadership. The group-centered teacher might often argue that even if his method were no more effective than traditional methods in achieving the usual course objectives, it is so important that students learn to work effectively in groups that it may even be worth sacrificing some other objectives in order to promote growth in this area. Active participation gives students an opportunity to gain recognition and praise which should, according to the learning theory, strengthen motivation.[10]

In the language classes of School District A there is a heterogeneous group of students, and it is advisable that teachers adopt a different psychological approach which takes into consideration the needs, interests, aptitudes, and abilities of the pupils. The teacher should detect the student's problem, reduce it to its component parts, and rebuild the learner's confidence by drilling these parts. Synthesis should follow the analysis. What good is it to cover sixteen [illegible]ters in the first year and eight chapters in the second year if the content is too ambitious and discouraging for the maturity level of the students? The proposition offered by psychologist Bugelski, State University of New York at Buffalo, should become the challenge of the language

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[10] Ibid., p. 256.

teacher: "When a student does not learn, the teacher fails the course."[11]

The students' answers to the question, "Why did you discontinue the study of the foreign language?", have touched five important areas in language learning: articulation, teacher's characteristics, methodology, grouping, and usefulness of the foreign language. The effective foreign language teacher in high school is the most important key to the success of the educational program. By transcending a faulty organization through profound knowledge of human nature, and with a method all his own, he will compel the intellectual development of his pupils. Modern foreign languages, being one of the "cultural subjects," depend in large upon the teacher for their success. This is also evidenced in a study by Dr. Douglas C. Sheppard in which he reports the results of a questionnaire given to forty college students who were seeking certification for the teaching of a modern foreign language in the public secondary schools of the State of New York. To Question 11 of the questionnaire: "What do you think was primarily responsible for 'your catching fire' in the study of foreign languages?",

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[11] B. R. Bugelski, The Psychology of Learning Applied to Teaching (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1964), p. 92.

eleven answered "a teacher," seven "several teachers," six "my high school," four "a professor," and three "several professors."[12] Thus, 77.5% of those students who were about to enter our profession have been influenced by a foreign language teacher.

The preparation of a foreign language teacher, as described in Chapter II of this study, is of paramount importance to language learning and should be one of the most highly valued activities of the language department of any university or college.

Grouping

During the interview, a surprising number of students expressed a desire for homogeneous grouping. Mary B., an under-achiever (10th grade, I.Q. of 110), said that students who are equally "smart" in the language and do the same kind of work should be in the class together. "After all," she explained, "a student who is having difficulty with the language can't possibly keep up with an A student, and an A student does not like to be slowed down by a student who is having difficulty."

Foreign language teachers expressed the same feeling in the departmental meetings, and pointed out that

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[12]Douglas C. Sheppard, "Those Who Are About to Teach: Some Observations on Attitudes," Language Federation Bulletin, New York State Federation of Foreign Language Teachers, No. 2, XX (November, 1968), p. 11.

some class time is wasted either by discussion of problems raised by the able students which are beyond the comprehension of the other students, or by problems raised by poor students which the other students feel are too elementary.

Our system of grading in the schools was developed when it was assumed that all children could learn the same things at the same chronological age if they tried hard enough and did not emphasize individual differences. Failure to learn was morally reprehensible and was dealt with by the hickory stick. Those who still did not learn left school and went to work. Education was the privilege of the wealthy or gifted few. Nowadays, as Dr. Walter Creuson, Associate Commissioner for Elementary, Secondary, and Adult Education of the State of New York, has said, we are committed to educating all the children, those from poor as well as those from wealthy homes; the fast learners and the slow ones; those with special talent and those not so blessed; and the physically strong as well as the physically disabled. We have to provide educational programs adapted to individual children with a wide range of abilities, interests, and needs.[13]

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[13]Walter Creuson, "Today and Tomorrow," Centennial Horizons, The Years Ahead in Education, (Albany, State University of New York, 1967), p. 14.

It is true that although a multiple basis for grouping can be used, such as intelligence scores, recommendations of previous teachers, achievement scores, and social maturity, groups still differ, but instruction can be adapted more nearly to the abilities of the students, thus adding to the effectiveness of instruction and eliminating feelings of alienation and discouragement in the pupils. The present-day approach to grouping suggests that it should be kept as flexible as possible so that pupils can move from one level of proficiency to another without much delay. This way, a program of foreign language instruction can be "tailored" in content and proportioned to fit the pupils' abilities, needs, interests, and aptitudes.

In 1930, J. B. Tharp, in a study at the University of Illinois, found homogeneous grouping to be superior in foreign language classes,[14] and in 1945, Cheydleur, in another study at the University of Wisconsin, concluded that homogeneous grouping and smaller classes are consistently superior to heterogeneous groupings.[15]

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[14] J. B. Tharp, Studies in Modern Language Teaching (New York: Macmillan Co., 1930), pp. 367-400.

[15] F. D. Cheydleur, "Criteria of Effective Teaching in Basic French Courses," Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin, Serial No. 2783 (August, 1945), p. 9.

These two studies support the students' and teachers' views on ability grouping.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

Summary and Conclusions

The primary aim of this study has been to examine the foreign language program in School District A with the purpose of determining the attrition, and compare it with that of B, another school in the county having approximately the same enrollment, essentially the same type of student, and equivalent socio-economic background.

A secondary aim was to compare the attrition in foreign languages of School A with that of two additional suburban schools, C and D, one having a higher, and the other a lower, socio-economic background, with the purpose of discovering if the socio-economic characteristics of a school district correlate significantly with patterns of withdrawal from language study. These four schools were chosen out of twenty-eight school districts in Erie County; Schools A and B would tend to represent the average of the communities, School C the above-average, and School D the quasi-average.

Pupils of School District A had a mean average I.Q. of 106, while in School District B the mean average I.Q. was 107.2, in School District C it was 109.8, and in School District D it was 102.6. The median income per family in 1966-67 was $7,749 - $8,748 in School District A, $8,237 - $9,236 in School District B, $10,316 - $11,315 in School District C, and $7,213 - $8,212 in School District D.

Total Value per Resident, WADA, often referred to as "ability of the district," Tax Rate on Full Value referred to as "local effort," teachers' salaries, amount of wealth of the communities, high school survey tests, and Junior High Scholastic Ability Tests helped the writer in determining the socio-economic background of the school districts.

In addition, it has been presumed that the very nature of this investigation would at least suggest answers to some important questions such as the following:

1. Why do high school students drop a foreign language after devoting several years to the study of it?
2. Are there clearly identifiable points at which students tend to discontinue their study of a foreign language?
3. To what extent do student-expressed reasons for

dropping the study of a foreign language coincide with other evidence?

4. To what extent do teacher-expressed reasons for student dropout coincide with other evidence?

The reasons for a study on attrition were suggested by the literature which did not uncover a significant body of information on attrition in foreign languages in the secondary schools; by administrators, supervisors, consultants, and teachers who expressed an earnest interest in this problem.

The author has researched the problem and divided it into two phases. The first phase consisted of statistical data on socio-economic levels of the communities, comparisons of pupils in School A with others in the county, and foreign language attrition in Schools A, B, C, and D. The second phase consisted of reports on students' questionnaires, interviews, foreign language sequentiality, and classroom observations. The questionnaires were sent to forty foreign language dropouts of School A, who had graduated but had dropped the study of the foreign language in the second or third years. A 100% return was achieved as a result of subsequent follow-ups by mail and personal visits. Fifty

foreign language dropouts, chosen randomly, were contacted and interviewed in School A with the purpose of uncovering the students' reasons for discontinuing the study of the foreign language. An interview guide was developed and the foreign language teachers of School A assisted in the preparation of the questions. The writer, also, was asked by the teachers to observe the classroom climate, and he used Flanders' Interaction Analysis, which is unique in preserving a certain amount of information regarding the sequence of behavior.

A summary of the data collected is presented and conclusions are drawn. It must be cautioned, however, that this study tends to place the summary and conclusions within certain defined boundaries, e.g., that the attrition in foreign languages reflects programs operating during the academic years 1962 - 1968, that the interviewers were people who had an interest in and a bias toward foreign languages, and finally that some claims, desires, and comments of the interviewers are reinforced by other studies. To facilitate the presentation of the findings, the order established at the beginning of this chapter will be followed, and no rank order or priority listing is intended by the numerical identification of the statements.

1. The survey taken to establish the socio-economic background of the school districts suggested that schools situated in agricultural and industrial communities placed a major emphasis on vocational and distributive subjects, and offered only three years of foreign languages. In these schools, the person responsible for articulating and supervising the foreign language program was usually the principal.

2. Schools situated in the residential communities, with a population of 20% or more of professionals, managers, and business proprietors, and with 55% of the students continuing their education after high school, tended to begin the study of foreign languages in the seventh grade or earlier, and the program was articulated by the department head or a coordinator.

3. In the four-year sequence, the attrition of School B was higher than that of School A, although both schools had essentially the same type of student and equivalent socio-economic backgrounds. This is in accord with the view that language learning depends upon many variables. In fact, there seems to be a rather definite agreement in the related literature that intelligence and motivation are not the only factors leading to success in foreign language learning. The

teacher's personality, the quality of instruction, the learner's aptitudes, the school philosophy of education, articulation, sequencing, grouping, the quality of materials, the length of the sequence, and a favorably-disposed principal play a great role in the teaching and learning of a foreign language in the secondary schools.

The following Tables indicate the mean average attrition in foreign languages in Schools A, B, C, and D.

TABLE 20

MEAN AVERAGE ATTRITION IN THE MODERN LANGUAGES FOUR-YEAR SEQUENCE

School District	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Mean Average of Students Who Completed the Sequence
A	12.5	47.8	50.0	6.6	23.2
B	24.8	49.7	71.5	..	11.6
C	15.5	30.3	43.2	..	33.3
D	27.0	69.8	85.0	Not Offered	..

TABLE 21

MEAN AVERAGE ATTRITION IN THE MODERN LANGUAGES THREE-YEAR SEQUENCE

School District	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Mean Average of Students Who Completed the Sequence
A	28.8	43.0	24.6	37.3
B	30.2	61.7	21.0	28.5
C	20.0	37.8	9.2	47.4
D	30.6	53.7	22.5	24.8

TABLE 22

MEAN AVERAGE ATTRITION IN LATIN FOUR-YEAR SEQUENCE

School District	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
A	34.3	68.0	100.0	
B	32.9	66.7	100.0	
C	9.1	40.0	66.6	..
D	40.0	77.9	100.0	

TABLE 23

MEAN AVERAGE ATTRITION IN LATIN
THREE-YEAR SEQUENCE

School District	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
A	20.0	74.0	..
B	33.4	66.7	..
C	35.7	44.4	..
D	41.7	71.5	..

4. The percentage of students who completed the five levels in the six-year sequence was French 26% and German 25.6%. The mean average attrition is 8% in Level I, 26% in Level II, 41% in Level III, 18% in Level IV, and no attrition in Level V.

5. Schools A and B, situated in districts representing the average socio-economic communities, had an attrition lower than School D, but higher than that of School C.

6. School C, situated in a district representing the high socio-economic communities, had an attrition in modern languages significantly less than that of Schools A, B, or D.

7. School D, situated in a district representing

the low socio-economic communities, had an attrition in modern languages significantly higher than that of Schools A, B, or C.

8. The attrition in Latin was significantly higher than that of modern languages, and in the four-year sequence the majority of the students discontinued their study at the end of the second level.

9. Attrition in modern language enrollments in the four-year sequence reached its highest point at the end of the third level.

10. The critical points in dropping foreign language study occurred at the end of the second and third levels.

11. The longer the sequence, the smaller the attrition per level; the shorter the sequence, the higher the attrition per level.

In the second phase of the problem, the students' questionnaire and interviews indicated that 50% of the pupils dropped the study of the foreign languages because they had satisfied the requirement for college entrance, and the other 50% discontinued their study for one of the following reasons:

a) the second or third level was "hard," and they were afraid of not being "very successful"

in the next level of the language;

b) preferred another subject;

c) not interested in continuing;

d) advised by the guidance counselor to discontinue;

e) did not like the teacher;

f) it was "hard" to adjust to the methods and expectations of a different teacher upon moving up from the junior high to the senior high.

Also, the students wanted the ideal foreign language teachers to be patient, kind, understanding, to have an interest in them, to structure the learning according to their proficiency in the language, to speak the foreign language fluently, and to use it most of the time in the classroom.

The students' answers in the questionnaire and in the interview have touched upon some very important issues in language learning; e.g., articulation, teacher's characteristics, methodology, and grouping. Their criticisms and suggestions were well founded. In fact, in comparing the first and second year grades of one hundred students, selected randomly, it was discovered that 45% of the pupils who received an A in the first year of the language received a lower grade in the second year, and 50% of the pupils who received a B or a C in the first year, received a lower mark in the second year.

Also, Flanders' Interaction Analysis revealed that:

1. Teachers used more direct behavior in their overall interaction patterns, especially in motivating and controlling the class.
2. Teachers scarcely praised and encouraged pupils' behavior.
3. The amount of "Teacher Talk" varied, and in some instance was four times greater than that of the students.
4. The classroom was "Teacher-centered" rather than "Student-centered."

During the interviews a surprising number of students expressed a desire for ability grouping in the various levels of the language so that the underachievers would not have feelings of discouragement and would learn according to their abilities.

Most teachers were aware that their methodology and the amount of content required were not satisfactorily adjusted to student differences, but they felt there was little they could do to change these circumstances so long as the State Regents' Examinations continue to be given at the end of the third year in the three- and four-year sequences.

APPENDIX

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Why did you discontinue the study of the foreign language?

2. Which year was the most difficult? Why?

INTERVIEW GUIDE

All questions listed herein will be used with the fifty respondents. Respondents' comments might prompt other appropriate questions which will assist in exploring more deeply certain aspects of the study.

1. Why did you discontinue the study of the foreign language?

2. What did you like most about studying foreign languages?

3. What did you like least about studying foreign languages?

4. Which year was the most difficult? Why?

5. What did you like the most about your foreign language teacher?

SURVEY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS
IN ERIE COUNTY

1. Name of School _____

Address _____

Name and Title of Person completing questionnaire _____

_____

Enrollment 7-12 _____

2.

	French	German	Spanish	Latin	Other
Earliest grade in which sequential foreign language study is begun					
Foreign language enrollment in that grade					
Total enrollment in that grade					
Number of years offered					

3. Are all students required to study a foreign language?

____Yes ____No

If Yes, briefly state the requirement _____

_____

4. If all foreign languages are not begun at the same grade level, the choice of foreign language is determined by:

Student and parent interest _____
Teacher availability _____
Popularity of language _____
Community make up _____
Other _____
Specify if possible _____
_____

5. Which of the following criteria determine a student's admission to foreign language study? Where a minimum standard exists such as for I.Q. score please enter it in appropriate box. Otherwise simply check.

	7	8	9
Teacher recommendation			
Scholastic average			
Grade on language arts			
I. Q.			
Verbal score			
Motivation and interest			
Reading scores			
Other _____			
Open to any who select it			

6.

	7	8	9th or later
% of total grade enrollment beginning in			
No. days per week classes meet			
Length of class period			
Credit given--0, ½ unit, 1 unit			
Level I completed in: Modern language			
Latin			

7. When foreign language study is begun in grades 7 or 8, is a separate four-year program begun in grade 9?

____Yes ____No

8. At what grade level were regents offered in 1965?

Modern language _____ Latin _____

9. Type of course offered in grades 7 and 8

	7	8
Level one	_____	_____
Enriched course	_____	_____

Same text and materials as in grade 9 _____

Different text and materials than grade 9 _____

Other _____

10. How was time found for language study in grades 7 and/or 8?

    Taking time from other subjects _____

    Redividing day to form another period _____

    Lengthening day _____

    Exempting students from other subjects _____

    If so, what subjects _____

11. Teaching materials are:

    Uniform throughout the system _____

    Uniform at each level in each school _____

    Vary with the teacher _____

12. Testing materials are:

	Uniform for:			Teacher Mode			Standardized		
	U	S	F	U	S	F	U	S	F
System									
Building									
Level									

U = Unit; S = Semester; F = Final

Name(s) of standardized examinations used _____

_____

_____

13. Who is responsible for articulating the foreign language program? _____

14. Are students who begin in grades 7 or 8 ever integrated with students who begin in grade 9 or later?

_____Yes _____No

If Yes, when? Level 2 ____
Level 3 ____
Level 4 ____

15. Within the four-year program are different tracts offered? (i.e., basic, regents, honors)

_____Yes _____No

Within the six-year program? _____Yes _____No

16. Does your school have Foreign Language in the elementary school? If yes, will you please complete the following:

Grade level at which it is begun _____

Enrollment K-6 _____

How are students selected _____

_____

How many days a week is it offered and for what length periods _____

_____

How is it integrated with secondary program?

What specific language or languages are offered?

What text, syllabus and audio-visual materials are used?

Do you have a language lab?

EVALUATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Directions: Check ( ) the column most applicable to each item. (If the item does not exist, or does not apply in your schools system, please explain this under Comments, referring to the item by number.)

	Strong Aspect	Needs Improvement
Program Objectives		
1. The goals of teaching and learning a modern foreign language are listening, speaking, reading, writing, and cultural insight, with varying stress at different instructional levels as outlined in State syllabi and reflected in State examinations	_____	_____
2. The goals of teaching and learning Latin are reading skill, general linguistic knowledge, aesthetic enjoyment, and cultural insight, as outlined in State syllabi and reflected in State examinations .	_____	_____

Comments:

Program Organization		
1. One person holds responsibility for the effective operation of the department	_____	_____
2. The program does not offer more modern foreign languages than the school can support, as evidenced by the proportion of advanced courses to intermediate and elementary courses	_____	_____

Program Organization (cont.)	Strong Aspect	Needs Improvement
3. A second modern foreign language is offered only after a full 4-year sequence in each of the present offerings (presumably including Latin) has been established	_____	_____
4. A reasonable proportion (the State proportion is in excess of 35 per cent) of the total school population is enrolled in foreign language study	_____	_____
5. Enrollment in foreign language study is open to all interested pupils	_____	_____
6. Commercially available foreign language aptitude tests and achievement tests are used in the administration of the foreign language program	_____	_____
7. There is flexible ability grouping, with pupils being regrouped as necessary on the basis of performance	_____	_____
8. The program is kept as administratively simple as possible while heeding the needs, interests, and abilities of the pupils	_____	_____
9. Each successful pupil enrolled in a Regents course studies one foreign language through the completion of at least three levels .	_____	_____
10. For college-bound pupils, an attempt is made to lengthen the sequence of foreign language study to the completion of four or more levels	_____	_____

Program Organization (cont.)	Strong Aspect	Needs Improvement
11. For successful college-bound pupils, the study of one mdern foreign language is sequential from its starting point through grade 12	_____	_____
12. Non-Regents foreign language study is continued through the longest possible sequence permitted by individual wishes, capabilities, and general conditions	_____	_____
13. Successful pupils do not discontinue the study of their first foreign language to begin the study of a second foreign language	_____	_____
14. Pupils are not forced to discontinue foreign language study through poor scheduling practices	_____	_____
15. Flexible scheduling practices are used to enhance the quality of foreign language study and to increase its availability to all interested pupils	_____	_____
16. No class is a "catchall" for uninterested or problem pupils . .	_____	_____
17. Grade 7 instruction in continuation of FLES is sequential in every way and continues developing the proficiencies attained by the end of FLES	_____	_____
18. Instruction beginning in grade 7 and continuing in grade 8 is offered daily throughout each academic year	_____	_____

Program Organization (cont.)	Strong Aspect	Needs Improvement
19. Guidance counselors are well informed on pertinent aspects of foreign language study (values, goals, techniques of study, availability of study for all interested pupils, ability grouping, sequential study, minimum three-level sequence terminating at end of grade 12 for college-bound pupils)	_____	_____
20. Each teacher's total schedule of duties is reasonable and leads to maximum instructional effectiveness	_____	_____
21. All concerned are aware that a level of language learning is defined in terms of the appropriate Syllabus and not in terms of commercially prepared textual materials	_____	_____
22. All concerned are aware that daily instruction throughout each academic year in grades 7 and 8 may result in completion of one level of study in terms of the Syllabus . .	_____	_____
23. All concerned are aware that daily instruction provided for average and above-average pupils throughout each academic year in grades 9 through 12 is meant to result in completion of one level of study in terms of the syllabus	_____	_____
24. Pupils at different levels of foreign language study are not intermixed in one class nor are pupils with significant FLES experience intermixed with beginning pupils in grade 7	_____	_____

Program Organization (cont.)	Strong Aspect	Needs Improvement
25. Pupils who are native speakers of a given foreign language are placed in classes of appropriate level, regardless of the length of their prior formal study (if any)	_____	_____
26. Pupils take the Regents examination in their foreign language upon completion of the third level of learning in terms of the syllabus .	_____	_____
27. All concerned are aware that passing of the Regents examination in a modern foreign language entitles the pupils to three units of Regents credit under Group II (major sequence), regardless of the length of time spent in completion of Level III or in preparation for the Regents examination	_____	_____
28. All concerned are aware that the fourth year of foreign language study leading to a special notation on the Regents diploma must be spent in completion of Level IV (or as part of the Advanced Placemet Program), and that this study must take place in an academic year following passing of the Regents examination	_____	_____
29. All concerned are aware that, following passing of the Regents examination, a pupil is entitled to one unit of Regents credit for completion of each succeeding level of study in terms of the syllabus or each academic year of study under the Advanced Placement Program	_____	_____

Program Organization (cont.)	Strong Aspect	Needs Improvement
30. The minimum numerical justification for offering a course beyond the third level does not exceed 10 pupils	_____	_____

Comments:

Secondary Curriculum Offerings

Language	Enrollment by Level and Section	No. of Class Periods Per Week	No. of Weeks Per Year
Example: German	I(21-25-25)	5	40

	Strong Aspect	Needs Improvement
1. An advanced Placement course is offered to outstanding pupils who have completed a minimum of three levels of study in a given modern foreign language	_____	_____

Secondary Curriculum Offerings (cont.)	Strong Aspect	Needs Improvement
2. All Advanced Placement courses are conducted according to the CEEB Advanced Placement Course Descriptions and appropriate State guides	____	____
3. All pupils passing the Advanced Placement course take the CEEB Advanced Placement Examination according to the organization of the course	____	____
4. Due compensation is made in the workload of teachers who are responsible for Advanced Placement instruction	____	____

Comments:

Quality of Instructional Staff

1. Foreign Language teachers understand, speak, read, and write fluently the language that they teach	____	____
2. Teachers maintain through familiarity with current professional literature and developments in teaching foreign languages . . .	____	____
3. Teachers are generally familiar with educational problems of children of varied cultural, national, and racial backgrounds .	____	____

Quality of Instructional Staff (cont.)	Strong Aspect	Needs Improvement
4. Teachers have pertinent background information on each pupil	____	____
5. Teachers actively participate in professional meetings, formal study, and intervisitation . . .	____	____
6. Teachers have spent a minimum of one summer in a country whose language they are teaching . . .	____	____
7. Teachers do not have outside interests which prevent complete and enlightened dedication to daily classroom performance in this school	____	____

Comments:

Classroom Management and Instructional Methods		
1. Unit and lesson plans are devised carefully and well in advance of presentation, and are subject to constant scrutiny by a supervisor for suggestions and by the teacher for possible revision	____	____
2. Each presentation is carefully planned around identifiable goals and problems which take into account the status of each pupil at a given moment	____	____

Classroom Management and Instructional Methods (cont.)	Strong Aspect	Needs Improvement
3. The presentation of instruction is varied, and the pace is appropriate to the difficulty of the material and the ability of the pupils	_____	_____
4. Each presentation allows maximum participation for each pupil . . .	_____	_____
5. Pupil-teacher ratio is appropriate	_____	_____
6. Teachers are skilled in analyzing spoken language and in correcting pupils' errors	_____	_____
7. Teachers are skilled in teaching pupils how to read and how to write the foreign language	_____	_____
8. There is little talk in English "about the language"	_____	_____
9. Out-of-class assignments are carefully explained	_____	_____
10. Insofar as possible, out-of-class assignments involving audiolingual skills require use of electro-mechanical equipment, prerecorded tapes, and possibly practice discs	_____	_____
11. Wherever possible, opportunities are provided for authentic cultural contacts	_____	_____
12. Opportunity for remedial instruction is systematically provided .	_____	_____

Comments:

Pupils' Achievement (Modern Foreign Languages)	Strong Aspect	Needs Improvement
1. At the end of the first level of learning, pupils can understand aurally all of the dialogs, structure drills, and oral narratives of their basic texts . . .	_____	_____
2. At the end of the second level of learning, pupils can aurally comprehend recombined and cultural narratives of some difficulty and are capable of understanding capsulized oral versions of newspaper and magazine articles	_____	_____
3. At the end of the third level of learning, pupils can aurally comprehend foreign language radio broadcasts, telecasts, and motion picture sound tracts with some lexical and grammatical guidance .	_____	_____
4. At the end of the fourth level of learning, pupils can understand moderately difficult foreign language broadcasts, telecasts, and films, with a minimum of lexical and grammatical problems	_____	_____
5. At every level of learning, the pupils' pronounciation of the foreign language is authentic, both as to basic sounds and as to other phonological features .	_____	_____
6. At the end of the first level of learning, pupils have a good stock of basic sentences and expressions which they are able to use orally in familiar situations	_____	_____
7. At the end of the second level of learning, pupils have some oral control of the "grammar" of the foreign language and can respond to questions or statements of a conversational nature in the language	_____	_____

Pupils' Achievement (Modern Foreign Languages) (cont.)	Strong Aspect	Needs Improvement
8. At the end of the third level of learning, pupils can converse with some fluency on familiar topics in the foreign language and can discuss their readings orally in the language	_____	_____
9. At the end of the fourth level of learning, pupils can initiate and sustain conversation in the foreign language, and they can make oral reports in the language on readings of appropriate maturity	_____	_____
10. At the end of the first level of learning, pupils can read at and somewhat beyond the degree of their audiolingual skills	_____	_____
11. At the end of the second level of learning, pupils have increased the gap between what they control audiolingually and what they readily understand visually . . .	_____	_____
12. At the end of the third level of learning, pupils have a good degree of skill in reading prose as represented in selected works of fiction and in popular magazines and newspapers	_____	_____
13. At the end of the fourth level of learning, pupils can read quite fluently a wide variety of literary and nonliterary prose and are able to do considerable reading for the acquisition of knowledge on topics of personal interest	_____	_____
14. At the end of the first and second levels of learning, pupils can write accurately in the foreign language what they can say in the foreign language . . .	_____	_____

Pupils' Achievement (Modern Foreign Languages) (cont.)	Strong Aspect	Needs Improvement
15. At the end of the third level of learning, pupils can also write friendly letters and simple reports in the foreign language . .	_____	_____
16. At the end of the fourth level of learning, pupils can also write reports on readings of reasonable maturity and compositions on topics of cross-cultural interest	_____	_____
17. Pupils are generally successful in taking Regents examinations. The percentage of pupils passing the examinations compares favorably with the State average . . .	_____	_____

Comments:

Pupil Achievement (Latin)

1. At every level of learning, the pupil's pronunciation of Latin prose and poetry is accurate in terms of the material being studied	_____	_____
2. At the end of the first level of learning, pupils have acquired the ability to understand and say simple Latin sentences, but without having made audiolingual control of the language one of their major goals	_____	_____

Pupil Achievement (Latin) (cont.)	Strong Aspect	Needs Improvement
3. At the end of the first level of learning, pupils have achieved some skill in direct comprehension of written material as well as in translations of Latin into English	_____	_____
4. At the end of the first level of learning, pupils can write Latin from dictation and can write Latin prose involving manipulation of grammatical patterns . . .	_____	_____
5. At the end of the first level of learning, pupils, by means of reading in English and possibly in Latin, have begun to understand the contributions made by Rome to Western civilization . . .	_____	_____
6. At the end of the second level of learning, pupils can read Latin prose with a fair degree of direct comprehension	_____	_____
7. At the end of the second level of learning, pupils have become competent enough in the language to be able to translate Latin prose of appropriate difficulty into idiomatic English	_____	_____
8. At the end of the second level of instruction, pupils' written control of structure has increased commensurately	_____	_____
9. At the end of the second level of Latin instruction, pupils have developed their ability to apply knowledge of Latin to an increase of their recognitional vocabulary, in English and possibly in other languages	_____	_____

Pupil Achievement (Latin) (cont.)	Strong Aspect	Needs Improvement
10. At the end of the second level of learning, pupils have achieved an increased knowledge of the Roman world	_____	_____
11. On completing the third and fourth levels of instruction:		
*Pupils have read Latin masterpieces with understanding and appreciation	_____	_____
*Pupils can read both prose and poetry aloud in Latin with proper observation of all features of the language . . .	_____	_____
*Pupils have appreciable direct comprehension without translation	_____	_____
12. On completing the third and fourth levels of instruction, pupils are able to translate appropriate Latin passages into free and easy-flowing English	_____	_____
13. On the completion of the third and fourth levels of learning, the writing competence of the pupils is such as to support their skill in reading or translating from Latin to English	_____	_____
14. At the end of their third and fourth levels of learning pupils have:		
*A keener appreciation of the contrasts between Latin and English	_____	_____
*Greater command of vocabulary . .	_____	_____
*More accurate understanding of the principles underlying the development of Latin	_____	_____
15. At the end of the third and fourth levels of Latin instruction, pupils comprehend the Roman background of Western civilization	_____	_____

Pupil Achievement (Latin) (cont.)	Strong Aspect	Needs Improvement
16. The percentage of pupils passing the examination compares favorably with the State average	_____	_____

Comments:

Pupil Evaluation Program

1. Evaluation is timely and is planned to ensure progressive development of appropriate skills by all pupils	_____	_____
2. Teachers are skillful at rating performance on all major aspects of basic skills	_____	_____
3. Pupils are rated on performance in all major aspects of basic skills .	_____	_____
4. Grade books have a section for recording progress in all major phases of learning	_____	_____
5. The program for making and administering local final examinations is department wide and supervised .	_____	_____
6. Standardized tests are used to measure pupils' achievement or proficiency at levels where a State-prepared examination is not available	_____	_____

Pupil Evaluation Program (cont.)	Strong Aspect	Needs Improvement
7. Passing of the appropriate Regents examination is required for a "Major sequence," but not for Regents ~~credit on an~~ elective basis nor for "local credit."	_____	_____

Comments:

Availability and Use of Facilities and Instructional Materials

1. Course materials are sequential and adequate to meet the objectives of instruction	_____	_____
2. Basic course materials are varied (e.g., include prerecorded tapes, discs, films, and filmstrips) according to need	_____	_____
3. Electromechanical equipment:		
*Is available in sufficient quantity	_____	_____
*Meets minimum standards for satisfactory voice reproduction	_____	_____
*Has appropriate components clearly geared to tasks which are well understood by all the teachers	_____	_____
*Is used with maximum effect for achievement of purposes	_____	_____
4. An adequate modern library of basic and current literature on the nature of language, language learning, and language teaching is maintained for use of the teacher	_____	_____

Availability and Use of Facilities and Instructional Materials (cont.)	Strong Aspect	Needs Improvement
5. Varied and stimulating materials for extra course work, which are available to pupils at all levels of study, provide special interest and incentive for self-development beyond minimal requirements	_____	_____
6. Electronic equipment and suitable accompanying materials are made available to disadvantaged children on a special basis . . .	_____	_____
7. Local, State, and Federal funds are fully utilized as available to provide needed equipment and materials	_____	_____

Comments:

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